

# MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SERVICE

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## USE OF WOMEN IN PARKING METER CONTROL

*What has been the experience of cities using women to patrol parking meters? What are the duty hours, salaries, and other conditions of employment for these women?*

One of the major solutions to local parking problems may be stated as an alternative — either provide more parking spaces in the downtown area or make better use of existing facilities. Since the downtown shopping area normally is an area of intensive use, the first alternative often is eliminated because of the seemingly exorbitant cost.

The second alternative also is liable to prove to be rather costly and for very good reasons. The development of a capable and efficient police force requires much time and effort. Police work has become specialized to a greater degree, and the training of a police officer has become more expensive. Many police officials are reluctant to release more of their highly trained crime-fighters (already in short supply) to the repetitive and routine detail of checking parking meters, a detail that does not require extensive training.

Since the trained police officer has to be quite flexible in his duties, the regular pattern of checking parking meters may be quite often interrupted by calls for assistance in various matters, such as unlocking bumpers, "moving" traffic violations, and so on. As a morale factor, this assignment is not particularly welcome to many police officers because of its routine nature and because of the amount of abuse to which he may be subjected by disgruntled over-time parkers and the uninformed public.

Most municipal administrators are aware of the role that municipal employees, especially those in constant contact with the general public, play in the establishment of sound public relations. The public seldom knows very much about the use and importance of a parking meter in traffic control. To get this idea across usually requires a good deal of patience and tact in all of the enforcing officer's contact with the public.

Because of these and other problems that arise in adequate parking meter enforcement, a number of cities have turned to the use of women in parking meter control. This report is based to a large extent upon material gathered by the division of research and budget, city of Phoenix, Arizona (Ray W. Wilson, city manager), in its study of a number of cities known to use women in parking meter enforcement. Data gathered by Phoenix for 23 cities are shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3 and are summarized below.

### Legal Status

The basic problem in the use of women in parking meter control is the determination of their legal status, i.e., are the women to be fully commissioned police officers, specifically limited officers, or specially designated nonpolice employees? Each category has its attendant limitations and complications.

- (1) If the women are fully commissioned officers, are they to be paid at the same rate as male police officers? If not, could the city be sued at some later date for the difference in salary paid? Are the women entitled to participate in the police pension plan?
- (2) If the women are specifically limited officers, what duties are they to be limited to?

Table 1

## DATA FOR 23 CITIES USING WOMEN FOR PARKING METER CONTROL

City	Popu- lation (in thou- sands)	No. of Parking Meters	No. of Women Employed	Starting Salary	Starting Patrol- man Salary	Salary Ratio— Women to Men	Work Hours per Week	Foot Patrol or Vehicle
Oregon City, Ore. . . . .	9	525	4	\$290	\$360	81%	44	foot
Great Bend, Kans. . . . .	17	653	1	180	260	70	48	foot
Greeley, Colo. . . . .	25	1,048	3	175	295	60	30	foot
Hutchinson, Kans. . . . .	37	1,096	2	287	287	100	48	foot
Rapid City, S. D. . . . .	39	1,240	2	180	302	60	40	foot
Wilmington, N. C. . . . .	47	800	2	225	285	79	48	foot
Asheville, N. C. . . . .	53	642	3	201	325	62	44	foot
Inglewood, Cal. . . . .	58	837	3	303	375	81	40	electric
San Angelo, Tex. . . . .	68	1,190	4	175	260	68	40	foot
Wichita Falls, Tex. . . . .	68	1,200	5	235	300	75	40	foot
Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. . . . .	75	2,019	3	251	330	76	48	mtr.sctr.
Stockton, Cal. . . . .	76	2,600	5	266	340	78	40	mtrcycle
Alexandria, Va. . . . .	85	955	3	245	296	83	40	foot
Winston Salem, N. C. . . . .	88	1,326	6	220	276	80	40	foot
Greensboro, N. C. . . . .	95	1,450	6	210	282	74	40	foot
Fresno, Cal. . . . .	118	2,000	10	315	368	85	40	mtrcycle
Lubbock, Tex. . . . .	135	1,175	4	184	300	61	40	foot
Savannah, Ga. . . . .	138	2,886	4	175	240	73	30	foot
Charlotte, N. C. . . . .	160	1,200	12	191	282	68	45	foot
Austin, Tex. . . . .	183	2,000	6	223	320	69	40	foot
Salt Lake City, Utah . . .	210	3,500	12	175	295	59	40	foot
Denver, Colo. . . . .	510	5,000	8	214	390	55	40	foot
San Antonio, Tex. . . . .	525	1,700	8	200	340	59	40	foot

In those cities that relate their manpower requirements to the national average per 1,000 population, are these women to be included in the manning tables?

(3) If the women fill special nonpolice positions, are the citations they issue valid? If the women do not issue citations but rather "notices" that state that the motorist has overparked, could the notices be enforced and fines levied?

The legal status of women in parking meter control will vary depending upon state statutes and the city charter or code under which the municipality operates. Consideration also should be given to the primary purpose of the use of women in this capacity. Are the women to be primarily public relations officers with the additional duty of parking meter enforcement or vice versa? The answer to this alternative will aid in defining the authority and duties of the women so assigned.

Of the 23 cities contacted in this survey, five used women as fully commissioned officers (Fresno, California; Hutchinson, Kansas; Wilmington and Winston-Salem, North Carolina; and Oregon City, Oregon); five cities used the women as limited commissioned officers (Ft. Lauderdale, Florida; Great Bend, Kansas; Greensboro, North Carolina; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Alexandria, Virginia); and the remaining 13 cities place the women under some other designation.

The women were assigned to the police department in 17 of the 23 cities. The exceptions were the Texas cities which made them responsible to the traffic engineer or created a special department (Wichita Falls) and Denver, Colorado, which also placed them in a special category (see Table 2).

An example of an ordinance creating a special designation for women in parking meter enforcement is included as Figure 1 at the end of this report.

### Qualifications and Training

Because of the public service responsibilities of the position and the importance of public relations, the qualifications for the position have been set at a level to permit selection of the best possible personnel. The qualifications required will of course vary from city to city, but experience suggests that they can be set quite high. Lubbock, Texas, had 40 applicants for four available positions, and Oregon City, Oregon, had 75 applicants for three positions.

Perhaps the most restrictive requirements for applicants are those established by Wichita Falls, Texas: Each Public Relations Officer is to be between the ages of 26 and 32, married, and a parent. She must be a homeowner and have lived in Wichita Falls for several years. Her husband should hold a substantial job in the community and not be connected with the armed forces. She must weigh between 110 and 125 pounds and be physically fit as established by physical examination.

Most of the other cities are not quite so restrictive, the desirable qualifications being graduation from high school, high standards of conduct, and the ability to pass written, oral, and physical examinations. The age requirements vary for initial appointment: Fresno, California, 25 to 35;

Table 2

## DATA FOR 23 CITIES USING WOMEN FOR PARKING METER CONTROL

City	Initial Uniform Allow- ance	Annual Uniform Allow- ance	No. of Pa- trolled Meters	% of All Meters Pa- trolled	Commis- sioned Officer	Assigned to Police Dept.	Average Length of Block (feet)	Type of Parking
Oregon City, Ore. . .	\$250	\$ 50	525	100%	yes	yes	250	parallel
Great Bend, Kans. . .	150	--	400	62	yes	yes		diagonal
Greeley, Colo. . . . .	150	--	500	100	no	yes	400	diagonal
Hutchinson, Kans. . . .	238	--	300	55	yes	yes	300	diagonal
Rapid City, S.D. . . .	100	50	800	100	yes	yes	400	diagonal
Wilmington, N.C. . . .	--	100	400	100	yes	yes	360	both
Asheville, N.C. . . . .	83	--	214	100	no	yes	500	both
Inglewood, Cal. . . . .	75	--	--	100	no	yes	300	parallel
San Angelo, Tex. . . .	250	125	400	100	no	no	500	both
Wichita Falls, Tex. . .	300	240	300	100	no	no	300	parallel
Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. . .	100	--	600	89	yes	yes	off st.	both
Stockton, Cal. . . . . furnished		--	--	100	no	yes	300	both
Alexandria, Va. . . . .	150	50	330	100	yes	yes	300	parallel
Winston Salem, N.C. . .	162	--	221	100	yes	yes	400	both
Greensboro, N.C. . . .	279	125	290	100	yes	yes	300	parallel
Fresno, Cal. . . . .	none	--	--	100	yes	yes	400	parallel
Lubbock, Tex. . . . .	300	--	300	100	no	no	270	both
Savannah, Ga. . . . .	15	--	345	47	no	yes	300	both
Charlotte, N.C. . . . .	--	--	--	--	no	yes	400	parallel
Austin, Tex. . . . .	--	200	350	88	no	no	340	both
Salt Lake City, Utah . .	none	180	350	100	no	yes	740	both
Denver, Colo. . . . .	none	--	132	21	no	no	600	parallel
San Antonio, Tex. . . .	250	100	200	70	no	no	300	parallel

Stockton, California, 21 to 35; San Antonio, Texas, 24 to 32; Lubbock, Texas, 28 to 45; Fort Lauderdale, Florida, 21 to 35; and so on. One of the limitations established by both Fresno and Stockton is that the officers must resign at 40 years of age.

A sample job description for the position of Parking Control Officer, as used in Lubbock, Texas, is included as Figure 2 at the end of this report.

The training programs used by the individual cities range from the basic recruit training used for all police officers to brief job orientation. San Antonio, Texas, has a four-week training curriculum which includes a tour of city offices in order to familiarize the women with city operations, sightseeing excursions to establish the location of tourist attractions, legal briefings, and a tour of duty at a local charm school. Wichita Falls, Texas, has a 100-hour training program devoted to public relations, parking meter repair, map reading and city orientation. Lubbock, Texas, emphasizes parking meter operation and repair in its one-week program because it uses a number of different types of meters, and the checkers must be familiar with the main causes of trouble and how to make simple repairs. Inglewood, California, includes first-aid in its training program. Fort Lauderdale, Florida, includes a tour of duty with the violations bureau, coupled with closely supervised "on-the-job" training. The training program in Fresno, California, is equally divided between road training in the use of a three-wheel motorcycle and classroom instruction on the vehicle code, local ordinances, departmental rules and regulations, and public relations.

#### Salary and Hours of Work

A number of the cities which responded to the questionnaire stated that they set the salary scale at the level of senior clerk in order to attract high caliber personnel. The salaries paid in all 23 cities ranged from a low of \$175 per month in four cities to a high of \$315 in one city. The salary ratio of these women to police patrolmen ranges from 55 to 100 per cent, and the average is about 80 per cent.

The number of hours worked per week varies from 30 to 48 hours, the most common being 40 hours. A comparison of the hours of work, salary, and the number of women employees is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

#### AVERAGES: SALARY, HOURS, AND NUMBER OF WOMEN FOR PARKING METER CONTROL

Population Group	No. of Cities	Starting Salary	Salary Ratio — Women to Men	Work Hours per Week	No. of Women Employed
5,000 - 10,000	1	\$290	81%	44	4
10,000 - 25,000	2	172	75	39	2
25,000 - 50,000	3	246	80	45	2
50,000 - 100,000	8	263	85	42	5
100,000 - 250,000	6	211	83	39	8
250,000 - over	3	263	71	44	6
<u>Number of Parking Meters</u>					
0 - 999	6	241	76	44	3
1,000 - 1,999	10	206	71	41	6
2,000 - over	7	249	74	41	7

State requirements vary as to the membership of these women in police pension funds, and some cities have questioned the advisability of their participation. Fresno, California, has adopted the policy of having the women participate in the fund. Since the women must resign at age 40, however, all of the money paid into the fund by the women is returned to them with interest upon separation from the service.

#### Uniforms and Equipment

The uniforms worn by the women in parking meter control generally are similar to those worn by the men in the police department. In a few cities, however, distinctive uniforms are used. The uniforms worn by the Public Relations Employees, in Wichita Falls, are furnished by the city and are designed especially for the particular job. The summer uniform consists of a hat with blue trim and red crown; a navy blue skirt; a red jacket with a large, white, butterfly collar on which has been embroidered in blue the words "City of Wichita Falls"; a navy blue leather shoulder strap bag large enough to hold everything needed in carrying out their duties; and blue shoes. The fall and winter uniform consists of a skirt and jacket that are tailored of blue silk gabardine. Each jacket has two red and white patches designating the wearer as an employee of the city of Wichita Falls. The blouse is tailored, has French cuffs, and is worn with a silk scarf tie. Each member is furnished with cuff links, ear clips, red nylon gloves, a navy blue tailored top coat, a raincoat with hood, and galoshes. The cost of the summer uniform is \$175, and the cost of the winter uniform is \$230.

Fresno, California, makes no provision for even an initial uniform allowance, since it does not make any provision for the male members of the department. As noted in Table 2, the initial and annual uniform allowances vary considerably.

The women patrol on foot in all of the cities except four: Fresno and Stockton, California, where a three-wheel motorcycle is used; Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where a motor scooter with side car is used; and Inglewood, California, where an electric cart is used. The advantages cited for the electric cart were maneuverability, efficiency, initial cost one-half that of a three-wheel motorcycle, and lower operating costs. This cart also has the advantage of permitting the women to wear skirts, so that the uniform "conveys the necessary air of authority but not at the expense of femininity."

In only one city, Great Bend, Kansas, are the women armed, and this is at their own expense.

#### Additional Duties

The primary duty of the women in the cities surveyed is the control of parking meters with almost an equal emphasis on public relations. As public relations representatives of the city the women carry change for the convenience of the parking public, are well versed in the geography of the city (that is, familiarity with the outstanding landmarks, commercial establishments, and street layout), and may carry bus and train schedules.

Some of the cities assign additional duties. These include the repair of parking meters; collection of parking meter fees and the counting of the receipts; operation of the municipal elevator, police dispatcher and clerical assistant (Oregon City, Oregon); search of female prisoners (Winston-Salem, North Carolina); and official hostesses of the city at public functions (Austin, Texas).

#### Conclusions

The number of cities using women in parking meter control is steadily increasing and extends beyond the cities contacted for this report. Perhaps a significant event is a city the size of Philadelphia hiring women for this purpose. All of the cities that are using women in this capacity at the present time seem well satisfied with the results obtained.

Some of the advantages are:

1. The women free men for more essential duties such as criminal investigation, control of moving violations, and so on.

2. Women do a better job of controlling the parking meters, especially in getting rid of the chronic "meter feeders."
3. Because of the nature of the duties, meter checkers can be paid less than police patrolmen.
4. With additional training, women may be used for traffic control at rush hours, large gatherings, and parades.
5. The women provide an excellent opportunity for better public relations.

The disadvantages reported are minor:

1. Women can only be used for parking meter control or closely allied duties.
2. Women are more susceptible to extremes of temperature and inclement weather.

In all of the cities contacted, there is unanimous agreement that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages in the use of women in parking meter control. The number of citations written has increased, but, more important, the parking turnover and the amount of curb space available has significantly increased. After the initial shock of women parking meter checkers has worn off, all of the cities have indicated an increase in favorable public relations, an advantage that is rather difficult to measure in dollars and cents.

It may be well to note the remarks of Chief H. R. Norton of the Fresno Police Department: "They actually get more respect from motorists than do the regular officers. This is probably because they are women, and the motorist knows that a citation is inevitable should they err in their driving or parking. Experience has taught them that they cannot talk or argue a woman out of a ticket. In other words, we have found that a man will not argue with a woman, and another woman doesn't dare!"

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Grateful acknowledgement is made to Ray W. Wilson, city manager of Phoenix, for making the study available and to John M. Uriel and Selden G. Kent, of the division of budget and research, who reviewed a tentative draft of this report and offered useful suggestions.

## Figure 1

**ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING PARKING CONTROL OFFICER, LUBBOCK, TEXAS**

AN ORDINANCE CREATING AND ESTABLISHING THE POSITION OF PARKING CONTROL OFFICER; PROVIDING THAT WOMEN SHALL BE ELIGIBLE THEREFOR; PROVIDING THE DUTIES OF SUCH PARKING CONTROL OFFICER, INCLUDING THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE PARKING METER ORDINANCE NO. 564 AND AMENDMENTS THERETO; PROVIDING THAT PARKING CONTROL OFFICERS BE LIMITED TO AUTHORITY HEREIN EXPRESSLY PROVIDED; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

WHEREAS, the City Commission finds that the continual shortages of personnel in the Police Department and the fact that police officers are urgently needed for duty along lines other than the enforcement of the Parking Meter Ordinance No. 564 has created a condition permitting the downtown parking problem to become increasingly difficult; and,

WHEREAS, it would be in the public interest to provide for an office and position for eligible women to enforce the provisions of said Parking Meter Ordinance and certain other curb parking violations in the downtown area; and,

WHEREAS, the fact that increased enforcement of parking ordinances and laws is necessary to relieve the congested traffic and parking conditions and that this Ordinance makes provision for the usual daily operation of a municipal department constitutes a public emergency requiring the passage hereof at its first reading; NOW, THEREFORE,

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LUBBOCK:**

**SECTION 1.** There is hereby established and created the office and position of "Parking Control Officer." Such office and position may be filled by women whose qualifications, physical and educational, will permit the performance of the duties of Parking Control Officers hereinafter defined and in accordance with such requirements that may be established from time to time by the City Manager. All Parking Control Officers shall be under the immediate supervision of the Traffic Engineer and be a part of the Traffic Engineering Department.

**SECTION 2.** It shall be the duty of each Parking Control Officer to issue written notices, as provided in Section 10 of Ordinance No. 564, whenever any vehicle is found to be unlawfully parked on any public street in the City of Lubbock in violation of any of the provisions of said Ordinance No. 564 and all amendments thereto or found unlawfully parked in any loading or freight zone or in any no parking zone designated by appropriate signs and/or markings, whenever such vehicles are found so unlawfully parked within the area of all parking meter zones now or that may be hereafter established by the City Commission in the City of Lubbock.

**SECTION 3.** This Ordinance shall never be construed as granting or establishing in Parking Control Officers the powers or authority of a peace officer, and such Parking Control Officer shall be strictly prohibited and limited to the exercise and performance of the duties provided for in Section 2 (two) of this Ordinance.

**SECTION 4.** The provisions of this Ordinance shall not be construed to repeal any of the provisions of Ordinance No. 564, known as the Parking Meter Ordinance, and amendments thereto, or any other Ordinance of the City of Lubbock except where same may be in direct conflict herewith, but this Ordinance shall be cumulative of the provisions of all other such Ordinances.

**SECTION 5.** The fact that this is an Ordinance providing for the usual daily operation of a municipal department creates an emergency requiring that all rules providing for the several readings of proposed Ordinances be suspended, and this Ordinance shall become effective from and after the date of its introduction and unanimous passage.

Figure 2

CLASS SPECIFICATION, LUBBOCK, TEXAS  
PARKING CONTROL OFFICER

DEFINITION

This is law enforcement work of a routine nature in seeing that parking regulations are properly observed by the driving public.

Employees of this class are primarily responsible for patrolling on foot an assigned area in order to observe and issue tickets for parking violations. Duties will also include dispensing information to the public such as directing them to wherever they wish to go and answering such miscellaneous questions as may be asked. Work thus requires considerable tact and courtesy in dealing with the public as well as the physical ability to walk long distances during the working day. Daily instructions as to assignments are received orally or in writing from superiors, and work is reviewed through occasional field checks in order to observe the thoroughness of performance and through the study of operating reports on tickets issued.

EXAMPLES OF WORK PERFORMED (Any one position may not include all of the duties listed, nor do the listed examples include all tasks which may be found in positions of this class.)

Walks on assigned route of several blocks of parking meters making several complete tours a day; observes parking meter violations and issues tickets for all violations; observes and issues tickets for any other obvious parking violations such as unauthorized parking at a bus stop or at a loading zone; advises as tactfully as possible car operators as to why they are being issued tickets if they make inquiries regarding such; observes and reports the locations of meters out of order or in need of repair.

Answers the questions of the driving or pedestrian public on any matters asked; directs drivers and pedestrians to wherever they wish to go; informs public as to the location of private and public facilities when so requested or informs them where they might obtain the information or services which they are seeking.

Performs related duties as required.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGES, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

Working knowledge of the geography of the city and the locations of the more important private and public facilities.

Ability to learn the procedures and regulations involved in the enforcement of city parking ordinances.

Ability to deal tactfully and courteously with the driving public and the general public.

Ability to enforce with firmness and tact the ordinances and regulations pertaining to parking vehicles.

Ability to express oneself clearly and concisely orally, and to direct the public as required.

Ability to prepare and keep simple operating records.

Good physical condition such as to permit walking long distances daily and sometimes under unfavorable weather conditions.

DESIRABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Any combination of experience or training equivalent to the following: Experience in dealing with the public while either serving under public or private employment; and graduation from a standard high school.

NECESSARY SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS

Between the ages of 28 and 45 at the time of appointment.